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Editorials

THEOLOGY AT ANDOVER NEWTON

Theology is study concerning God. At Andover Newton we study God in the light of Jesus Christ. Such study means learning to live, to know, to preach and to teach God's universal love in and through the church for the world. We teach confessedly and convincingly a kerygmatic theology, not only vigorous for thought but even more practical for life. We serve as the mind of the church, creatively helping it to be more true to its own nature and to tell people God's fuller truth. Theological truth is not only truth for truth's sake, but much more truth for the sake of our finding right relations with God, man and nature.

Study about God centers in his self-revelation primarily in Jesus Christ. Christ is the Word made flesh, *Agape* become *Logos*. That the *Logos* was made flesh means the he came in a particular setting of history. The *Logos* became *Kairos*. Biblical theology studies God's *Agape* as reported in the Bible. Its task is to make clear the Word from the flesh and to make rich the Word through the flesh. Biblical theology is basic to Christian faith, for in Christ, reported in the Bible, God's self-revelation broke through.

The biblical faith, however, leads only forward, not backward. It is a one way street. The Word keeps being received and witnessed to in the life of the church. The *Logos* enriches the church by its being ever more fully interpreted in history. The main context or sense of the faith which organizes all subsequent development, as the ongoing life of the church requires, is the *skopos*. The *skopos* is the main motif for the faith which works to ensure its remaining definitively and distinctively Christian. To find and make available this *skopos* within its enriching concrete growths in the history of Christian thought is the task of historical theology. We are thankful that Mr. Cragg is superbly equipped in personality, scholarship and experience to fulfill this function in teaching theology at our school.

Allowing the Word made flesh to speak within the idiom of its own day is the task of systematic theology. Systematic theology depends upon both biblical and historical theology, both now fortunately strong at our school, at least in potentiality for teaching, although more stress could be put on biblical theology. Systematic theology takes the Word made flesh, taught by the

biblical department within its uniquely originating *kairos* in the Bible and adumbrated in line with the *skopos* of historical theology through many *kairoi*, and labors to make that Word flesh again within the behavior patterns and thought modes of our present *kairos*.

The concrete application of God's Word to the social problems of our own day is the work of social ethics. What a Chalcedonian task is called for, neither to confuse the Word with the world nor to divide the Word from the world! Mr. Rutenber is constrained by both pulls as a pacifist and as a practical man at the same time, while also working concretely in our Roxbury Project. He will be joined in teaching by President Gezork, who once long and ably taught in this field in our school. Best of all, *Agape* becomes *Logos* through a dedicated cooperation of all fields of preaching, education, and psychology. Theology is God's living speech to men, the God who showed his heart and hand, his will and way, in Jesus Christ.

A new and fulfilling aspect of theological teaching is now being launched at Andover Newton. A new instructor, Meredith Handpicker, fresh from his doctoral studies at Yale University, is looking forward to devoting his main energies to the integrating of the theological fields and their outreach by means of small discussion groups of seniors, in an attempt to deepen the appropriation of the studies and to pull them together into personal unities within the lives and thinking of our students. This creative undertaking will deserve fuller report at a later time.

Thus theology is study concerning God through both the whole curriculum and the whole Christian community on our hill. Our day calls for securing stability and creative pioneering. Status quo Christianity is thoroughly discredited by the grievous failures of our times. There is revulsion from the old and clamoring for the new. We at Andover Newton believe that the deepest answer is the ageless love of God, centrally disclosed in Christ. Only God is eternal and yet ever fresh. To find and to communicate what he means for our day invites both creative adventure and securing stability. We live and work in him.

N. F. S. F.

God and Freedom

NELS F. S. FERRÉ

Faith and freedom are the two most important aspects of man's fundamental need: Love. Where love reigns, faith and freedom follow. When love dies, faith and freedom die also. Love, however, is almost impossible to assess from without. The reality or absence of love can best be seen in terms of faith and freedom both in the case of persons and of civilizations. The New Testament relates these realities in different ways. In one sense love is the first fruit of faith: We love because God first loved us; only by trusting that love can we ever find our fruition of love. But in another and deeper sense, love is the greatest of all spiritual gifts and, beyond gifts, the only way to fulfillment of life. In this sense faith follows the finding of love, and is, indeed, as Brunner explains, the affirmation of love, while freedom follows faith.

I

Our first task is to understand our basic terms: faith and freedom, with particular reference to the former. Faith is primarily a quality of life, a dynamic state of being. Faith is somehow a response of life. We must depend here upon the general, ordinary use of language. It is the opposite of fear. Faith frees the self. Fear binds the self. People of genuine faith are in the deepest sense free, while people oppressed by fear lack freedom. What more particularly do these general affirmations mean?

Faith is an evaluative response to reality. It is hard to know whether what is outside self or what is inside self comes first, or whether they are not in fact so closely inter-related that they cannot be taken apart by analysis. To do so, nevertheless, is the task we have undertaken. Conscious of how inseparable, in fact, these two aspects of faith are, I shall try my best so to analyze their relationship that they are not left apart. Technically speaking we are dealing with the relation of *fides quae* to *fides qua*, what we believe with how we believe, with the relation of *notitia* to *assensus*, the content of faith with our response to it.

It is difficult rightly to relate what is outside the believer to what is contributed on the inside. When what is believed is generally taken for granted, or at least held naturally by a community, the priority of the content of faith seems obvious. Then the objec-

This article was given at the American University, Washington, D.C., inaugurating its Faith and Freedom Lectures and will be included in a book to be published by Harpers this spring. It must not be reproduced in any manner.

tive side dominates. When, however, many differing faiths are compared along with the intensity or naturalness with which they are all held, the subjective aspect becomes the more prominent. Those firmly within a given state of faith have little patience with those who stress difference in content, the strength of the subjective side, and the almost relative nature of what is called the objective part of faith. One thing is certain: faith has both sides. For myself the vision of what is actually given for faith, the objective side, is so overpowering that I have to make myself face the fact that I find communicating what I see, convincingly and contagiously, difficult beyond belief; while others like Søren Kierkegaard have been almost equally impressed by the subjective side of faith.

One side of faith is acknowledgment; the other is affirmation. We acknowledge what is outside us; we affirm from within. No acknowledgment, however, is mere reception; while no affirmation is without reference to the outside world. Even existentialism refuses to be reduced to mere subjectivism. On the other hand, extreme objectivism cannot do without subjective appropriation; in the most objective field, physical science, we are increasingly aware of an element of construction. Ernst Cassirer has observed that:

The scientist cannot attain his end without strict obedience to the facts of nature. But this obedience is not passive submission. The work of all the great natural scientists—of Galileo and Newton, of Maxwell and Helmholtz, of Planck and Einstein, was not mere fact collecting, it was theoretical and that means constructive work. This spontaneity and productivity is the very center of all human activity.¹

We have to acknowledge because knowledge itself is a social act, depending upon ages of accumulative work. Language itself is necessary to knowledge, and language depends upon a process coeval with man as a human being. In other words, what is outside comes to us already interpreted by the history of the race. The interpretation may not be either necessary or right, as witnessed to, for instance, by the change and difference in all fields of knowledge; no one can start to think without any previous interpretation. All new insight depends upon depth of background. Whether the acknowledgment is conscious or not, faith in what is outside us begins on one side of its nature with this act of knowledge.

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¹ *Essay on Man*. p. 278.

Since faith on the content side is evaluative response, acknowledgment must involve selection. Not all experience is equally true, good, or worthy to be trusted. Evaluation means choice and preferential arrangement of what is experienced. What is given on the outside is not merely produced by the self; it is received; but it is received differently by different responders. This is the mystery of faith. Some content is selected by some; other content, by others. Certain realities given for experience are trusted by some and feared by others. Usually both the selection and the response involve ambiguities. They are seldom clear cut. Therefore at this point acknowledgment and affirmation come together. Why should there be such difference beyond difference in background in the interpretation of what is outside us and in the evaluative response? How does affirmation affect acknowledgment?

The secret of the relation between affirmation and acknowledgment is freedom. We are free *from* the truth. We are free from the truth by the power of acceptance or rejection. Neither act is fully pure, but mixed with our own finitude both of seeing and of willing. Freedom from the truth, in the first place, resides in our power to distort what we see in line with what we want to see. But neither is such distortion whole cloth. Acknowledgment presides over affirmation, demanding recognition, and if rejected by the conscious, takes vengeance in the subconscious. Truth can be distorted, but the distortion is registered in the self. Freedom from the truth also comes by the power to select from what we see. Affirmation chooses to acknowledge certain data more than others. We choose from what we acknowledge, and assume the right as well as the need to organize our experience around our preference. Such organization of experience is both acknowledgment and affirmation. Truth cannot be forced. Because of our freedom from the truth no one and no content can compel us.

We are also free from the truth by the power of acceptance and rejection in terms of our either seeking it or fleeing from it, of our either trusting what we find or our fearing it. Not all freedom from the truth is indirect through distortion or subtlety of selection and organization. We are free to face reality or to hide from it. In short, we are free to have faith or to have dread. Perhaps man's fundamental choice is his attitude towards acknowledgment: his affirmation or rejection of reality; his opening up or closing in on himself. Whether we take Heidegger's positive choice of defiance, or Bultmann's passive acceptance, the choice of faith, what matters is the quality of affirmation, the intensity of affirmation, and the direction of affirmation. No state of being, no stance of

response, no act of affirmation or rejection is without admixture, but the quality of life is determined by the relation we accept between affirmation and rejection.

We can also be free *in* the truth. Such freedom leaves no subconscious frustration and feeling of guilt. It precludes the sense of meaninglessness. Such freedom is the fullest possible relation between acknowledgment and affirmation, integrity and trust. And we can be free not only from and in the truth, but *for* the truth. Truth is always a construction; a combination of acknowledgment and affirmation, and therefore is creative. Truth is both had and made. This is why there is an adequacy and validity of personal truth within the unending ocean of truth, far beyond all social control or conventional tests. Truth requires faith and freedom. Besides there is the freedom for the truth that comes from discovery and invention. The genuine new is seen both in the mode of knowledge and of art, of direct receiving and indirect presentation. Truth requires both prose and poetry for its fullest expression. The new truth craves new language, while language itself facilitates freedom by liberating man from the concrete.

There are three stages of faith in its freedom: believing, believing in, and believing that. Believing is straight affirmation of what we acknowledge the way we acknowledge it. It is confrontation, encounter, acceptance, and if we may coin a verb, faithing. Its opposite is rejection and fear. This stage is Buber's I-thou relationship. Here belongs Jasper's insistence that whatever transcendence man can know must be known through *Existenz*. Here also fits Kierkegaard's exceedingly subtle analysis of existence communication as opposed to objectification. Believing *in* is one step away from abstraction. It can be a stage of alienation from primary confrontation and acceptance of reality, a weakening of affirmation in its acknowledgment. But it can also, on the contrary, be the fuller acceptance of the nature of the affirmation, a trusting of the understanding involved in the affirmation.

Believing *that*, the third stage, Buber calls the greatest disaster of faith, its death by abstraction. Believing *that* involves something "coming between" affirmation and acknowledgment. It can nonetheless be faith's fullest fruition; the understanding that the content involves its fullest implications. By freedom the stages can either weaken faith by abstraction or fill trust full by understanding. For instance, I believe God, I believe *in* God, I believe *that* God, can be a progressive weakening of faith or, oppositely, its crescendo. I believe God, I believe *in* God the Savior of men, or I believe *that* God will save his whole creation.

II

Our first task was to consider in general the nature of faith and freedom; our second, is to take up the relation of God to faith. We shall consider God as the ground of faith, God as the goal of faith and God as the glory of faith.

God is the ground of faith. Neither God nor faith is optional. Man must relate himself to God through faith. God is, as Luther claimed, that on which our heart depends, on which it wholly relies. God is the ultimate context of our lives, the center of our evaluative response, whatever governs life. II Peter affirms that whatever influence gets the better of a man becomes his master. Finite man cannot be self-sufficient in knowledge or life. He comes from, and is dependent upon, the reality in which he finds himself. God is whatever is most important and most real, whatever has the highest value and the strongest power for life. Faith is our response to God. Luther said that as we believe God so we have him. The choosing of context is inescapable; it is part of man's situation in living. The choice is faith. Man is incapable of total fear. Faith may be fear-laden or hope-filled, but every man has faith. To live is to believe.

Tillich in *Theology and Culture* distinguishes between the ontological and teleological way to God. The former knows God as the presupposition of life, the unconditional ground of meaning and power. The latter seeks from concrete existence to gather evidence for God, or to interpret God in terms of experience. Tillich chooses the ontological way. The truth is, however, that both ways are necessary. God as the presupposition of life is immediately available and logically inescapable. Every man has faith. To live, we repeat, is to believe. But the nature of God is more than formal meaning, more than the unconditional element presupposed by experience. Concretely for each person God is what is put first in life. This is the God of affirmation. But the God of reality, the God acknowledgeable beyond mere affirmation, is whatever has the right to be put first. Our ultimate is the true God only insofar as we interpret knowledge rightly or construe aright the truest indications of knowledge.

Thus God is not only the ground, but also the goal of faith. Man, in the first sense, would not seek God, as Pascal knew, unless he had already found him. We seek God and afterwards we know, as the hymnwriter claims, that it was God who first sought us. Or to think with Heschel: "to have faith means to justify God's faith in man."² But these affirmations refer to the objective,

² *Man Is Not Alone*, p. 174.

ontological side of faith, with God as its ground. The other side of faith is the quest. But the comparison of Augustine's "voice from without" with "the truth within" is life's hardest as well as most important task. It involves the correct joining of acknowledgment and affirmation. It means the making of a finally right evaluative response.

This is the goal of life. God is thus not only the ground but the goal of faith. Made by him and for him, our restless hearts seek him. This statement is true by definition and by experience. God is the ultimate ground on which our lives depend and by which they are grasped, but the nature of that dependence and that grasp we have to discover. The need for such discovery is life's constant task, giving it good ground for restlessness. This quest of faith for God involves man in what Kierkegaard called "the dizziness of freedom."

Whatever fulfills life is its ground and goal. Whatever frustrates life alienates it from the ground and goal. If life offers both, only a fulfillment large and deep enough to give meaning to frustration can be God. As Gardner Murphy has eloquently shown, frustration augments tension, and tension is the condition for creativity.³

The ground of faith and the goal of faith must together justify the way of faith. If no context for life and thought can join together the ground of faith—God as the presupposition for life and thought—and the goal of faith—God as the fulfillment of life and thought—in such a way as to give appropriate meaning to the relation between both, we are left with no God rightly to worship. Then acknowledgment and affirmation fail to come together and we are left with confusion and fear, with Sartre's empty freedom, with Heidegger's defiance, but never with the faith that sets free through fulfillment.

The Christian faith claims, far beyond our proving or explaining here, that God is holy, faithful Love. Reality in such a view can be trusted. Right acknowledgment and right affirmation come together in trust. Such trust is the glory of faith, for it sets man free. It sets man free with respect to the objective side of experience: God can be trusted. It sets man free with reference to the subjective side of experience: man can be free from himself. Man in accepting God can thereby know himself to be accepted. Such trust sets man free for others and towards nature. Acceptance of reality and self, of life's ultimate and intimate center, gives man freedom to accept all else. Man is caught in no choice be-

³ Cf. *Personality*, p. 305.

tween inner- and other-directedness; rather, he finds God-directedness. Such God-directedness gives freedom within and without with respect to self. We know enough in our experience of the way the fever of life shuts the self in on itself and fear poisons, weakens, and binds the self, to be convinced that its opposite, faith, when really had, can set the self free in the fullest and best way possible.

This then is the glory of faith. God can set free the self that has futilely struggled with its own chains. Fear suffers, or as the Bible says, has torments. Joy and peace come through believing. Such analysis we know to be right. To lose fear and find faith, especially in God as the ground and goal of life, is, existentially speaking, life's hardest lesson. Most people miss the glory of faith. Fear-filled eyes acknowledge as realism the dark spots or the drab gray of average life. The life of fear keeps pulling weeds anxiously without time for the enjoyment of life's flowers. Few find the faith that lifts and gives it glory. Such faith roots in God as the ground of life, the putting ultimates unequivocally first in life, and in the goal of life, trusting most fully the best we have seen in life. No facts can force such a choice. To be sure, certain experiences and insights can facilitate such a faith, but such high faith, the glory of man, can finally be nothing but a free act. Therefore we turn from God and faith to God and freedom.

III

God is the ground not only of faith, but also of freedom. Within a world of many wills there must be some ultimate unity of willing, if freedom of fulfillment is to be open for all. The condition of such freedom for all is an ultimate order generally available where persons are fulfilled by willing together some common good. God is the ground of such freedom. His will is for the highest good of all. He has so ordered and so controls the world that there is a lure for harmony of being within the self and among selves, both as a direct possibility of intrinsic human need and of resources in superhuman reality for meeting that need, and also as an indirect possibility of learning through the nature of experience in terms of the consequences of choice. Just as the realm of faith of some kind is inescapable, even so man cannot elude freedom. Sartre is right. Freedom is a necessity. Choose we must. Freedom is the birth-right and the responsible heritage of every life. Each person is unique and made to choose. Man becomes increasingly what he chooses. No one can ever choose for any one else as to ultimate meanings and qualities of relationship.

God is the ground of freedom both as the condition for freedom, without which the many wills would conflict and frustrate each other, and also as the giver of life where choice is the core of its inner nature.

But God is also the goal of freedom. Just as in the case of faith the presuppositional nature of faith gives it no concrete content but only the necessity of choosing context, even so God as the ground of freedom gives it only the general conditions for the freedom of all and the inner necessity of the freedom of each. God as the goal of freedom provides the content in experience for the fulfillment of freedom, personally and socially. Freedom as self-determination is given to each and all; there is no choice as to whether or not to have it. The only choice is how to use it, whether to affirm it or to try to flee from it, and in the actual choices we make. Freedom as goal involves the actual discovery of the nature of our freedom and how it can be fulfilled.

God as the goal of freedom is the destiny of man. The more man asserts his freedom the more he becomes a real self. The way he asserts that freedom determines his nature as a self. The assertion releases and creates the self. The content of that assertion makes the kind of self we become. Berdyaev is surely correct in naming man spirit and in claiming that the essence of spirit is freedom. The more man becomes spirit the freer he becomes, and the freer he becomes the more he is spirit. Tillich knows that "freedom without destiny is mere contingency and destiny without freedom is mere necessity."⁴

Aldous Huxley began by extolling freedom; in later life he now sees that the freedom he advocated was false, a mere cover for self-assertion. R. G. Owen has written that Marxist Communism understands that

real freedom has to do with the knowledge of, and conformity to, the true end of life, but it misunderstands the nature of man's true end. The point, however, that libertarianism misses altogether, is that real freedom resides, not in endless, unrestricted, and capricious choices, but in choosing the true end and in committing oneself to it.⁵

Certainly such a claim is the immemorial heritage of Christian freedom: to this fact the history of theology becomes eloquent witness.

God as the goal of freedom is beyond law. To be bound is not to be free. As long as the law is over man or over against man,

⁴ *Systematic Theology*, Vol. II, p. 130.

⁵ *Body and Soul . . .*, pp. 211-212.

man is not free. Full liberty is not within the law but beyond the law. The stage of obeying the law as law is over. This is the jubilant cry of Saint Paul. This is the triumphant shout of Luther. This is the preposterous claim of Wesley. Law lies dead where freedom reigns. But such a claim has nothing to do with lack of right relation. Freedom never violates the true nature and function of law. God as the goal and glory of faith is the God of love, and love fulfills the law. It overflows the law. It drowns its claim by the fullness of righteousness and leaves it a dead structure, powerless over the man of liberty who walks according to the law of the Spirit. Where Christ is, there is liberty. Fear needs the law; full freedom encompasses the law but never lives by it. Freedom lives the law not as duty, i.e. as law, but as love, as the new-found joy of right relations, spontaneous in its motivation.

God as the goal of liberty is the God of co-operative community within the creative resources for common fulfillment. It takes freedom to learn to trust such love. Freedom lives in the love learned by faith. Freedom to learn is given by God, the ground of freedom. The conditions for learning, the school of freedom, is given by God, the ground of freedom. The learning of such freedom through experience, however, God the goal of freedom makes possible. He abets its attainment. This is the case where the meaning and function of frustration, of evil, can be included in the process between God the ground of faith and God the goal of faith, whose means and media are the responsible choices of freedom.

The freedom of choice can be used to find the freedom of life. Freedom of life is the fulfillment of the freedom of choice. It is the state where neither fear nor duty oppresses choosing, but the choice is authentically free in motivation as well as in exercise. Such choice is autonomous, not as self-limited liberty, but as God-fulfilled freedom, good for all and available to all. Brunner and Tillich rightly name such freedom theonomous. In this sense God is not only the ground but the goal of freedom. He is the beginning and the end of liberty. The process in between belongs to our limited learning selves. The process of life in human time is pedagogical. Man's full liberty comes in the joining of acknowledgment and affirmation, the two basic aspects of faith in the free service and full friendship of God.

God as the ground and goal of freedom is peculiarly the giver of freedom. God is love. The nature of love is to fulfill the other. Persons, to be real, can be fulfilled only by freedom. Therefore God as love gives freedom as the condition for learning and living

love. In giving love he gives himself; in giving freedom he makes possible our true acceptance of his greatest gift. Therefore love is not only a spiritual gift, but "the more excellent way"—St. Paul's hymn to love: God is Spirit and the nature of Spirit is freedom. God made us spirits. The foundation of our lives is liberty. The more we accept ourselves the more free we are. True self-acceptance is the receiving freely and fully of reality: God the ground and goal of freedom.

God is personal. To be personal is to confront other persons. Genuine confrontation is a meeting of free persons. It may be encounter or it may be communion. Community is unity within togetherness. Love is the total gift of God, the experience of oneness ultimately and intimately within the richness of creative diversity. Spirit makes us free within, in our internal relations. Personal being is authenticated by our receiving freedom towards what is outside us, in our external relations. Rightly to receive God is to be set free within both our personal and our social relations. Such freedom comes from trusting God as love. Faith and freedom come together in God and go out insolubly from God universally and unconditionally.

Our age can accept or deny the effective living of faith and freedom, but it cannot so do except in relation to God, for God is the ground and goal both of faith and freedom. The problem is to walk wisely all the way from ground to goal, from the necessary conditions of faith and freedom to their fruition.

Church Union and Its Theological Foundations

GERALD R. CRAGG

(Note: In certain circles in the ecumenical movement there has been a mounting concern lest increasing cordiality among the churches should be arrested at the point of good will. A mood is no substitute for action, and the question has been raised whether duty does not lay upon ecumenical bodies a more active role in promoting union. The Faith and Order Commission felt that a study of the theological convictions underlying recent church union proposals would be of value for its purposes, and the following paper was written at its request. The documents on which it is principally based are THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CHURCH OF SOUTH INDIA (ed. of 1952); SCHEME OF CHURCH UNION IN CEYLON (1953); and RELATIONS BETWEEN ANGLICAN AND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES (1957). The scheme of union in North India in most essentials follows the Ceylon document.)

In a recent paper, the Secretary of the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches has strongly argued that "the step forward" which must now be taken "should be on the way from 'mutual understanding' to actual church union, and that while not ignoring the former, Faith and Order's theological attention should be increasingly focused on the latter." This concern must be seen against the background of the present ecumenical mood: a mellowing good will toward one another, and an increasing complacency with ourselves as we are. This is no doubt related to the renaissance of confessionalism. The denominations have been rediscovering their heritage, and they are so pleased with what they have found that they wish to keep it intact—for the enrichment, of course, of the whole Body of Christ.

For this reason it may be profitable to examine the theological presuppositions which apparently underlie concrete schemes of church union. Here we can detect the forces and convictions which are sufficient to inspire actual negotiations and to bring them to completion—or to its very threshold. I shall restrict myself to schemes which have at least been dignified by contact with printer's ink. In passing, it may be noted that they have much in common—similar structure, pattern, emphases, proposals, expedients, even phrases and expressions. This may be explained by

(i) the work of the Holy Spirit; (ii) a very narrow margin of possible ecclesiastical manoeuvre; (iii) extensive borrowing from previous reports by succeeding drafting committees. (This is one kind of apostolic succession which is not debated but is universally practiced.) Faith accepts (i); realism admits (ii); and experience suggests that (i) and (ii) are not incompatible with (iii).

In connection with the plea that the ecumenical movement should directly promote the movement toward union, it is important to notice that it has done, and is doing, so. In the older documents this is implicit: out of the increasingly close relationships of the churches has grown the realization that they can not rightly pursue their task apart. In the report on *Relations Between Anglican and Presbyterian Churches*, the indebtedness is explicitly avowed: because the negotiating bodies had participated in the ecumenical movement, it was necessary as well as possible for them to contemplate a further step. Moreover, as the report adds, the revival of biblical theology, which has been fostered by the ecumenical movement, provides the standards by which both aims and methods are to be judged.

The fundamental assumption, common to all the plans, is that behind the drive to unity there lies an inescapable pressure. God's will is expressed in Christ's prayer, "that they may all be one . . . that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." To assist in the realization of God's purpose is the duty of all Christians—and of the churches to which they belong. "Unity is not a contingent feature of the church's life, but is of the essence of it. One God, one people of God; one Christ, one Body of Christ; one Holy Spirit, one Fellowship of the Spirit—such is the incontrovertible logic of the New Testament teaching." Or, in the words of the Lund report, "from the unity of Christ we seek to understand the unity of the Church on earth, and from the unity of Christ and His Body we seek a means of realizing that unity in the actual state of our divisions on earth." Only a clear recognition of this constraint will persuade churches possessing strong traditions and deeply committed to their own heritage to seek reconciliation with other churches.

Unless it unites, the church today cannot hope to discharge its God-given task. In its present divided state it cannot be an effective instrument for accomplishing God's purpose. This has

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practical significance, but it is not a utilitarian argument. The church is to be a leaven in the life of each nation where it is placed; only a united church can permeate its environment with the gospel. The obverse of this is equally true: the church which affirms locally the unity of the Body of Christ can express in the life of the church universal the distinctive genius of the nation or race which it serves. Expressed in alternative terms, evangelism is always reduced to ineffectiveness by the divisions of the church.

What the church owes to its mission and to the world, it owes also to itself. The fuller life of the church—its deeper fellowship and its inner peace—will be incalculably enriched by actual union. This follows from the venture of faith which Christians make; it is a consequence also of the fact that only those who will commit themselves in faith to one another can hope to receive the enrichment which comes from participation in a wider heritage. A divided Christendom keeps in isolation the gifts intended for the benefit of all.

Uniting churches always see the step immediately ahead of them as a stage in a wider process, never as the final goal. A local union presupposes a greater hope; to bring together those who have worked and worshipped and witnessed apart is an anticipation of that fellowship in which ultimately each church should have its part. A particular union always looks forward to the eventual loss of its separate identity in the larger life of the church universal. For this reason, the maintenance of ties with all denominations with which any of the contracting bodies has had associations is not a matter of preserving sentimental attachments; it is explicitly seen as a means by which the ultimate goal will be brought nearer.

Every plan initially outlines its theological presuppositions; on these rest the specific proposals which make possible the united church. The unity which Christ gives his church is fundamentally a spiritual unity, but it must find appropriate institutional expression. Ecclesiastical organization is necessary; it must remain subsidiary. In every scheme of union, the creedal basis is indicated with austere brevity: Scripture, supplemented by the creeds (Apostles and Nicene). The claims of freedom are carefully protected—of belief (within the framework of ancient Catholic truth) and of worship (with due recognition of the essential services of the church in question). Union is not to be misconstrued as uniformity. The aim of union is to conserve the heritage of the participating churches in all its fullness and wealth. If each branch brings into a wider life its distinctive contribution, diversity

must result; to crush out differences would create monotony and would be treason against the wealth of insight which God has committed to the separated churches. In particular, union can never be regarded as the absorption of one church by another. Moreover, many terms which have often been used in the past should be discarded; superior-inferior, better-worse, valid-invalid, regular-irregular—these confuse rather than clarify.

All union schemes therefore emphasize their comprehensive character. They will embrace episcopal, presbyterial, and congregational elements of polity within their life. This, they point out, is because all three are found in the primitive church, and it is necessary to be loyal to the pattern of the early days. It is also true that on no other terms is a genuinely inclusive kind of union likely to prove feasible.

As concerns the doctrine of the church (i.e., the doctrine about the church) it is assumed that it has its origin in the merciful purpose of God and derives its life from Christ its head. "Members of the Church maintain their vital union with the Head of the Body, Jesus Christ, by the same faith through the various means of grace which He has provided in His Church, and glorify His Name by such good works as He has prepared for them to walk in" (Ceylon, p. 11). In particular, the ministry of the church is a divine gift, not an organizational convenience. The ministry is not a profession, nor is it confined to any selected group of men within the church. The gift is to the church itself; it must be safeguarded, transmitted, and exercised by the church. The whole church receives this ministry. What is loosely called "the priesthood of all believers" points to this corporate responsibility in which all share. But the schemes of union also believe that the ministry, in the more restricted sense, is both given by Christ and authorized by the church. In the present divided condition of the church, all ministries are imperfect. They are neither conferred by the universal church, nor exercised within it. Their authority is therefore imperfect, and to this extent all ministries are defective. The schemes assume that a wider context for the ministry presupposes a wider authorization in order to perform its functions. For this reason, Ceylon and North India provide a form of commissioning for fuller service in the new church. The previous ordination of the various ministries is specifically recognized; it is carefully explained that the further commissioning is not to be interpreted as constituting in any sense a reordination. Admittedly, this helps to surmount a very awkward barrier, and the misinterpretation of the recommissioning service is forestalled by

a preface explicitly stating that no insufficiency is implied in any of the ministries exercised in the divided churches.

The ministry, then, is the organ of the church as the Body of Christ; it is the means through which the royal priesthood committed to Christ's people shall be exercised. To the question, how shall this priesthood be exercised? the answer is always the same: through the three-fold ministry. Here, too, the appeal is to the example of the early church and the practice of subsequent ages; again, this is actually the only possible basis of negotiation. There is little difficulty about the presbyterate. It is sometimes pointed out that the full life of the church demands the effective union of emphases stressed in different measure by the separated churches—the priestly and the prophetic, sacramental worship and the ministry of preaching and teaching. A high and worthy ideal is consistently set forth; it is not necessarily an unrealistic one, but it is not one easily achieved. This is, of course, as it should be.

The problems arise not with the presbyterate, but with the higher order and the lower one—with the episcopate because history or doctrine have often embittered debate, and with the diaconate because there is no adequate doctrine to invest it with significant meaning. All the comprehensive schemes include episcopacy, since they cannot be really comprehensive on any other terms. All carefully disavow any particular interpretation of the office, and decline to commit themselves to any particular theology concerning it. The missionary churches, perhaps, are more anxious to emphasize the evangelistic task of the bishop in extending the frontiers of the church; the older communions are possibly more apt to stress his function in safeguarding the integrity of the church in life and doctrine. In the Anglo-Scottish report, the Anglicans concede, with some caution, that not all features of their diocesan episcopate are sacrosanct, and that episcopacy after a different pattern is possible. In other schemes, there is more evidently a concern to make clear that episcopacy does not necessarily approximate to prelacy; that it shall be elective and constitutional, and firmly set within a system of church government in which wide participation is possible. Everyone is concerned to see episcopacy delivered from the bondage of mere administration; everyone agrees that the pastoral office is of primary significance. Greater responsibility assigned to church courts might free the bishop of certain routine duties—or might add to them. Smaller dioceses might set him free to concentrate on his spiritual task—or might merely increase his preoccupation with financial worries. In all churches "episcopē" has been

exercised, sometimes by bishops, sometimes by presbyters acting either corporately or individually, and always under the authorization of the church. It is not always clear how the duties of "episcopē" shall be divided in the future, and the prime example is confirmation. Churches in which the minister has exercised this function are not anxious to relinquish this pastoral tie; Anglican churches strongly commend the value of episcopal confirmation. What usually prevails is a compromise in which both trust to the ultimate triumph of the best way.

The diaconate occupies a slightly indeterminate position. The British report makes a perfunctory reference to the possibility of effecting a reform, but no hint is given of the form it might take. In the Church of Lanka, the diaconate is defined in terms which suggest the limited ministerial functions associated with the office in the West. There is no indication as to whether it is regarded as a temporary status, a probationary preparation for fuller orders. In South India, the possible range of a deacon's work is suggested in greater detail. It is clear that he may exercise an important teaching and catechetical function, and it may be a ministry for life. (This, it may be conjectured, reflects the influence of neighbouring churches such as the Syrian Orthodox, which assign an important and often a permanent place to deacons). In this connection it is worth noting that in framing such schemes there are two alternative possibilities often advocated but not readily reconciled. If the diaconate is really an order in the ministry, it is not easy to retain it both as a probationary preparation for the presbyterate, and to invest it with significance as a distinct order exercising characteristic functions in the total life of the church. But if it can really be given a distinctive place and associated with a kind of service which a man may exercise all his life, it is difficult to distinguish it from the ministry of the laity on which currently so much emphasis is placed.

To this ministry of the laity both the Ceylon scheme and the Constitution of the Church of South India devote a chapter. The former speaks of it as a "lay apostolate which shares in the many-sided encounter with the world wherein lie the church's evangelistic task and opportunity." It then proceeds to describe this ministry in predominantly ecclesiastical terms. The same is true of the South Indian Constitution. Evidently the lay ministry is envisioned largely in an ecclesiastical context. This may be natural in documents which are concerned to establish the structure of a church. And it is, of course, much easier to recognize the need for a more creative alternative than it is to suggest it.

To produce a scheme of church union presupposes both statesmanship and political skill—a comprehensive vision of the ideal and a realistic grasp of “the art of the possible.” It is a tribute to the vitality of the contemporary church that it produces in increasing numbers documents that satisfy both requirements, and combine with them loyalty to the fundamental theological concerns of the church.

Ministers and Social Ethics: A Case Study

CULBERT G. RUTENBER

From time to time the ministers of the gospel are impaled on the pointed end of some expert's stick and placed under the magnifying glass. Ray Abrams did it in *Preachers Present Arms*, showing the distressing role of the clergy in whipping up war fever in World War One. Liston Pope did it in *Mill Hands and Preachers*, studying the role of the clergy in a famous strike situation in a mill town in North Carolina. Now Campbell and Pettigrew have done it in *Christians in Racial Crisis*, an analysis of the behavior and attitudes of the clergy when the crisis broke in Little Rock. What is valuable about all these studies is that they hold up the mirror to all of us in positions of Christian leadership and give us the opportunity of a fresh look at ourselves. The mirror is never to be taken as the whole truth. Authors who do sociological studies of this type are inevitably selective in their data and limited in their judgment. Yet, in so far as such studies spur us to more self-analysis and deeper self-understanding, they serve as the unpaid watchmen of our souls. To see our brethren in the ministry struggling with the fateful decisions which events force upon them is to recognize that we are men of like passions as they, and that we and they alike are fit objects of God's judgment and suppliants for his mercy.

In Little Rock there were active segregationists among the clergy who, apparently in perfectly good conscience, opposed any tampering with the status quo, identifying with assured dogmatism segregation and the will of God. In Little Rock there were also active desegregationists who, with great courage, called the status quo to the bar of God's judgment and found it wanting. But in Little Rock there was a third group, and in this group most of the ministers of the established denominations fell. This was the group that believed in desegregation but lapsed into silence as the crisis overwhelmed the city. Why? It is the answer to this question which particularly interests the social scientists from Harvard who made this study. It is the answer to this question which is particularly illuminating to us.

The authors trace the problem of the silent ministers in terms of role-conflict related to three reference systems: the professional (their fellow ministers, both local and national), the membership, and their own self-reference system. On the professional level, their denominational superiors were all for social criticism as long

as finances did not suffer, membership roles were not reduced, and attendance did not fall off. No gestures towards social liberalism were worth a dip in finances or attendance.

On the membership level, the attitude was of course predictable. The congregations were overwhelmingly segregationist in sentiment and were opposed to contrary statements or activity on the part of their pastors.

On the level of the self-reference system, three considerations dominated the image the minister had of his own ministry: his role as the cement which held the discordant elements of his church together in one whole; his role as the evangelist who brought in members and kept them coming; his role as the administrator whose task "is to encourage maximum annual giving and to plan for the improvement and expansion of the physical plant" (p. 92).

The minister found himself in a most difficult situation. On the one hand he was an employee of a congregation which paid him to perform certain functions. On the other, as a moral and spiritual leader, he had to deal in criticism, since no man or system is perfect. At the same time, his own future depended on how he handled the resultant tension since, unlike the executive of a large corporation who depends for career advancement on his superiors, the minister of the gospel "rises or falls with the response of the local congregation and community" (p. 118).

In this situation, the pressure of the congregation *against* the pastor doing anything became determinative. Unaccustomed to rejection for taking a stand on a morally relevant issue, unused to personal abuse for attacking evil, the minister lapsed into silence. His psychological need of the support of his communicants was so great that he could not move without it. The comments of Campbell and Pettigrew on why this was so are most revealing. After dismissing as a satisfactory explanation a mere concern for personal success, the authors proceed as follows:

... The answer seems to lie more clearly in the accumulated weight of years of training and experience in what may be termed the central ethos of the ministerial profession. The eyes of the minister are trained to turn constantly outward toward people, toward numbers. He must help people, guide them, win them. Their response becomes a measure of his personal worth. When the plates and the pews are full, and the bricks for the new wing are stacked outside, the evidence

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of a job well done is all too tangible. When old members greet him warmly and newcomers respond to his invitation to join his flock, he has a sense of well-being. It is not necessary to posit a worldly success motif nor a calculating, self-seeking design, to understand this response. It can be viewed as a logical outgrowth of the types of professional criteria he has accepted as a part of himself. His training teaches him to rest the case for his personal competence on the responses people make to his ministry. He becomes, in this sense, the embodiment of David Riesman's other-directed person. It follows, then, that any persistent defection in the ranks—whether it takes the minor form of tension and surliness, the more threatening form of absenteeism and tight wallets, or the most serious form of an organized resistance movement that aims to oust the minister—is a shattering personal experience. Not necessarily, we repeat, because he sees his personal life-goals becoming more elusive; rather, because according to the institutional norms that he has long accepted, he is incompetent, a failure. Why? Because the message he delivers is no longer attractive to people. Thus he is no longer attractive to people.¹

Towards the end of their study, Campbell and Pettigrew seek to identify the variables which seemed to affect the nature and extent of the minister's response to racial crisis. The data suggested the following hypothesis: (1) Support of desegregation decreases as racial crisis increases; (2) The more popular the denomination in the local area, the less likely are its ministers to defend unpopular causes; (3) The longer the minister has been in his church, the less likely he is to support desegregation during a crisis; (4) The minister is less likely to support desegregation during a crisis if he is over fifty than if he is under forty; (5) The minister's support of desegregation is less if his church is in a membership drive, or building campaign, or fund-raising campaign; (6) The less personally affected are the members of the congregation, the greater is the freedom of the minister to support unpopular causes; (7) The more successful (numerically and financially) a ministry is, the less likely the minister will be to give strong support to unpopular moral imperatives during a crisis; (8) The more stable the membership of his church, the less likely will the minister be to support unpopular causes during a crisis.

This telescoped summary of a significant book is all too brief, yet even so it surely suggests a disturbing picture—not of Little Rock as such but of the American church, for Little Rock is merely

¹ Ernest Q. Campbell and Thomas F. Pettigrew, *Christians in Racial Crisis* (Washington, D. C.: Public Affairs Press, 1959), pp. 119 f.

symptomatic of a nationwide disease. The prophetic temper of the Bible is often absent from the modern pulpit. Religion as a cultural buttress reigns supreme. The reasons for this, in so far as we can judge from this study of Little Rock, are both theological and spiritual.

Theologically, one detects here a distorted view of the church. The church is seen as an institution in society whose existence and unity must be maintained at all costs. Indeed, the only absolute in the Little Rock situation appeared to be: Don't disturb the life of the church! This appears as both the guiding principle of the local clergy and of their superiors. For the latter, a successful ministry warranting advancement is symbolized by a growing congregation and an increased budget. If members leave the church, congregational attendance falls off and finances go down, and the minister is a failure whatever else happens during his tenure. At the same time, this study makes clear that a similar concern for the unity of the church paralyzed the good intentions of the local minister and became the overriding consideration in the situation (see p. 93).

What is operating here is a serious confusion between the church as the fellowship of believers and the church as an institution in society. They are related but not by any means identical. Brunner may overstate the case when he says that the idea of the *ecclesia* has nothing whatever to do with the idea of an institution, but his emphasis is surely well-placed. The *ecclesia* is a fellowship whose unity is given in the Holy Spirit. It can no more be maintained by human manipulation and compromise with the truth than the Ark of the Covenant could be protected by the worldly efforts of a Uzzah. Yet the *ecclesia* cannot remain merely as a fellowship. It must organize in order to propagate its truth. It is at this point that a deadly danger emerges. The organizational structure develops a life of its own and smothers and obscures the truth it was fashioned to serve. The organization tends to become an end in itself. This is the fate of every high idea in history which gathers around it an organization to preserve and propagate it. The institution devours the parent idea. Yet the idea cannot live without embodiment in an institutional structure. This is the pathos of our human situation. This is the pathos of the church throughout its history. The life is lost in the clanking of the machinery. And the world takes note of the death of the idea at the very moment that the professional technicians are intensifying their concern for the proper care and maintenance of the purposeless machine.

A footnote from rather recent history will illustrate the danger in which the organized church always stands. When the Nazis took over France through the Vichy government, they launched the same program of extermination for the Jews that they carried through in Germany. As the lines tightened around the Jews, the leaders of the Reformed Church of France were forced to face the issue of whether or not they should speak out. They did not speak out! Ten years after the end of the war—ten years after the unbelievable depravity of the Nazi regime, with its gas chambers and furnaces for human destruction, had been completely documented and exposed in all depth of horror—one of the leaders of the Reformed Church said to another who had also been present when the decision for silence had been voted, “Nevertheless, we did the right thing. Any other decision would have split the church.” A commentator is lost for words. Not even the fears and passions of the existential moment of decision can be invoked in extenuation. In the full illumination of hindsight, nothing makes any difference—not the anguish of the victims, not the glory of God, not the truth of the gospel—but the survival, intact, of the organization.

Such tender, loving care for the institutional structures of the people of God is foreign to biblical thought. The Old Testament story is the story of a God who did not hesitate to destroy the institutions of Israel when they no longer served as instruments of his purpose. A faithful remnant was better than a mob of listless time-servers. Such is the lesson of book after book of the Old Testament. The preaching of the prophets is precisely a divinely inspired assault on the unity and stability of organized religion. In the New Testament this assault became a permanent break with the old structures as God makes a new beginning. But the new people of God are not exempt from the divine judgment through the dissolution of *their* cherished institutions. “Repent,” says the Risen Lord to the church of Ephesus, “else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place” (Rev. 2:5).

The point, then, is not whether the church exhibits unity but whether it is performing its function as a church of Jesus Christ. And what is decisive here is an understanding of the nature and mission of the church. The church is an eschatological community of faith, hope, and love in which the powers of the age to come have already become manifest. It is the delivered community (though its complete deliverance is yet future) by virtue of God’s saving deed in Christ, through whom the powers of sin and death

have been broken and release into the liberty of the sons of God has been effected. It exists for the glory of the God who summoned it to his praise and service. In its inner life of worship and nurture it manifests the melting power of the love of Christ to overcome sinful barriers to genuine community. In its witness to the world it points to the delivering Saviour and serves as his surrogate in identifying with men in their bondage and need. It thus becomes, by his grace, a delivering community which breaks the bonds of iniquity and speaks the word of healing and release. The necessity for such service is why, over and over again, God points his people away from absorption in religious practices and rituals to the needs of men. Thus in Isaiah 58, when the people complain that they fast and pray but God pays no attention, God responds through the prophet:

Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord?

Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily, and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.

Paul wrote the Corinthian church, "Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." The church does not belong to itself but lives for him who is the Great Emancipator, who wills emancipation for all. Thus to proclaim God's Good News is not merely to repeat the fact of Christ's death and resurrection "back there," but to relate his emancipating victory back there to the specific bondages that enslave men in the here and now. To preach the gospel in faithful fact is to stand before men and proclaim deliverance—deliverance from their own sin *and from the sin of others who rob them of the abundant life Christ came to bring*. No bondage can stand unchallenged in the presence of Christ. Christ's own interpretation of his mission—to speak good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, to bring sight to the blind (Luke 4:18)—must not be spiritualized into innocuousness.

It is clear that the church that takes upon itself the burden of proclaiming the gospel of divine deliverance has committed itself to a ceaseless grappling with the forces of evil in the world and with the structures of injustice in society. It has further committed itself to actualizing within its own fellowship the marks of a delivered community, a community where at least partial release from the prejudices and value-perversions of culture has been effected.

If the church, in the intention of God, is a delivered and delivering community, then the question of the degree to which it functions as such will not down in any local situation where the urge to absolutize its institutional unity arises. United for what purpose? And unless there is a clear answer to this in the light of God's will for his church, the insistence on institutional unity can itself be a way of betraying Christ. This is what Robert M. Miller is suggesting in the following passage:

Now, if the churches were ordinary institutions they could be excused for bowing to society's pressure . . .

But—and this is the point—Christian churches are not merely groups of individuals banded together for fraternal or cooperative purposes. They are not judged by frail human standards but by the uncompromising ideals of the Christian creed. However noble the aims of other institutions, only the churches claim a divine mandate to glorify Almighty God. Other groups may falter and equivocate, but the churches cannot excuse the gulf between their professions of faith and their practices of paganism.²

One of the disturbing things about the Little Rock situation was that the clergy who elevated the unity of their local church into an absolute seem not to have raised the previous questions. They did not ask with Roy Eckhardt whether religion in America had become a folk religion.³ They did not weigh the evidence which Will Herberg advances to show that the real faith of American churches is in the American Way of Life.⁴ They did not raise the question as to whether the unity of the church could be purchased at too high a price. They did not ask whether they had a responsibility to raise in their own person a witness to the truth in the very areas where their churches could not or would not. There

² Robert M. Miller, *American Protestantism and Social Issues, 1919-1939* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1958), p. 297.

³ A. Roy Eckhardt, *The Surge of Piety in America* (New York: Association Press, 1959).

⁴ Will Herberg, *Protestant-Catholic-Jew* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1955). Note especially chap. v.

is no evidence to suggest that they would have appreciated Hendrik Kraemer's response to a query about a suspected revival of faith in Europe: "Why, perhaps there is. Church attendance seems to be decreasing."

But if a distorted view of the nature of the church is one of the theological problems revealed by Little Rock, another one—and one very closely related to the first—is a distorted view of the nature of *agape*. " 'Actually, we've been taught that controversy is un-Christian,' pointed out one pastor."⁵

The avoidance of controversy is an all but universal phenomenon among ministers. It runs like a refrain through Pope's *Millhands and Preachers*:

None of the religious associations or organizations in Gaston County adopted any resolutions or engaged in any institutional action with regard to the strike (p. 274); The failure of the ministers to condemn mob terrorism and police brutality . . . (p. 283); No open criticism of the methods by which they were expelled was forthcoming in Gaston County (p. 293); So far as memories are reliable, no minister in Gaston County commented publicly on the death of Mrs. Wiggins or on the failure to secure convictions of the parties responsible (p. 294); No protests came from the churches or ministers in Gaston County, however, and no action to change the situation. No records or memories survive of ministerial comments of any type (p. 301).

The Gastonia situation which Pope reports and the Little Rock situation which Campbell and Pettigrew analyze were crisis situations. Therefore it is all the more interesting to note the same conclusion emerging from a study of a non-crisis situation. In *Small Town and Mass Society*, the authors note:

The minister is in the peculiar position of having to play down those views which are inappropriate to the public values of the community. To a large extent he is unable to express what he personally believes, except for accepted, uncontroversial dogma . . . To different degrees for different ministers, the congregations and community socialize the minister to local values.⁶

Vidich and Bensman stress the tremendous social pressures which conspire to reduce the minister to silence. In the small town they are discussing, they find that the town leaders themselves—churchmen all—limit the role of the minister and of the

⁵ Campbell and Pettigrew, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

⁶ Vidich and Bensman, *Small Town in Mass Society* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1960), p. 240.

church because they recognize that religion is potentially all-embracing.⁷ On the more limited scale of intra-church policy, Campbell and Pettigrew note the same thing. Here a church with a stable membership tends to develop its lay leaders who are a challenge to the leadership of the minister, whom they expect to outlast even as they predated his arrival. With their "our church" complex, they seek to circumscribe the minister's freedom to be controversial.

However, acknowledging the great pressures both within society and within the church making for ministerial silence, it is clear that, by and large, the ministers bear their chains with equanimity approaching acquiescence. The conspiracy of silence could not succeed without at least tacit help from the minister himself. And this help takes the form of affirming that controversy is somehow not nice. It is unchristian, unkind, and contrary to Christian love.

The marks of this attitude are on the whole of the life of the church. In the local congregation Rotarian familiarity is the order of the day. Everyone is expected to be agreeable at all times—nice, friendly, affable. Nothing must mar the nice spirit that reigns. No disturbance that might threaten the perfect harmony of the group must be permitted to gain a foothold. Disruptive disagreements must be stifled, controversial subjects swept under the rug. The peace that passes over all misunderstanding with smooth phrases and tranquilizing slogans rules unchallenged.

What is true of the local church is also true of the denomination. The man who raises questions, the man who challenges and objects, the man who presses a contrary view in the councils of the denomination, if he does so with any frequency, is labeled a trouble maker. He need expect no advancement at the hands of his ecclesiastical superiors.

If Christian love is to be equated with a kindness that avoids all controversy, an affability that skirts all unpleasantness, a friendly spirit that never jars, then God is not love. The Christian God is neither nice nor genial. He is a consuming fire—and this is precisely his love. Kierkegaard was surely right when he wrote that he who would say that God is love must add as the subordinate clause "therefore He is your mortal enemy"—the enemy of things-as-they-are (whether in me, in the church, or in the world) for the sake of things-as-they-may-be, in all their perfection and goodness.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 272.

The notion that Christian love means that Christians must never be disturbers of the peace, must never offend, or give utterance to any word that would be divisive or upsetting, is surely one of the strangest and most ironical perversions of New Testament truth. Our Lord was the greatest Lover of all—and the most controversial of all. True, he could preach on “Behold the lilies of the field, how they grow.” But, as Halford Luccock reminds us, he could also preach on “Behold the thieves of the temple, how they steal.” He was in perpetual hot water, and it was all of his own making. He just couldn’t stay off controversial issues. In his very first recorded sermon, as given in Luke 4, he made his listeners (good church people, all) so angry that they tried to mob him. From then on, his ministry was a perpetual argument between him and the leaders of church and community—over the sabbath, the Law, the will of God, the interpretation of the Old Testament, the discharge of leadership responsibilities, and so forth. They didn’t like it—who does? And since they could not silence him, they crucified him.

The record of the early church follows the same basic pattern. At first the disciples stayed behind their own four walls “for fear of the Jews.” But when they became indwelt by the Holy Spirit they became highly controversial. Peter celebrated Pentecost by accusing his hearers of being murderers—not the accepted way of winning friends and influencing people. The remainder of the Book of Acts is largely a running commentary on the controversy of the church with society—and even occasionally with itself!

Controversy can be damning. Entered into out of hostility, for the wrong reasons and with the wrong motives, it is the spirit of antichrist. But when entered into with the right motives, in the right spirit, at the right time—for the sake of truth, righteousness, and Christ—it invites the formulation of a new beatitude: “Blessed are the controversialists, for they shall be called the brethren of Christ.” The proper place for the listing of this new beatitude would be just before the blessing pronounced on those who are reviled and persecuted.

Kierkegaard once wrote, “In the New Testament, Christianity is the profoundest wound that can be inflicted upon a man, calculated on the most dreadful scale to collide with everything.”⁸ And, first of all, it collides with the minister’s own life and comfort. It we return to the Little Rock study—not because it is Little Rock, I repeat, but because Little Rock is Main St. and

⁸ S. Kierkegaard, *Attack on Christendom* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1944), p. 258.

each of us is the socially silent minister of the corner church—it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that behind the distortion of the biblical view of the church and of *agape*, lies a spiritual unpreparedness in the life of the minister. One must not generalize, of course. But if the silent ministers of Little Rock are at all typical, we are on sure ground in discerning a spiritual lack at the core of their dilemma. They were unprepared to look to Christ and him alone for their direction. They were unprepared to walk the way of the Cross. They were unprepared for the enmity of the world. They were unprepared for the loneliness of Christian leadership. They were unprepared for failure as the world judges it. They were unprepared for suffering.

The basis for this judgment is found in the attitudes which informed their decisions at the time of the crisis. In general, they reacted with the wisdom of this world rather than with the wisdom of the God who said of old, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways." This criticism—which could be leveled at most of us who are ministers—has been implicit in much that has been said earlier. But let me focus it with a quotation from Campbell and Pettigrew:

[The minister] also believes that communication with the sinner must be preserved at all costs—"You can't teach those you can't reach." It is important to maintain relations that allow the possibility of effecting gradual change in attitude and behavior over a longer time period. Especially, then, in a crisis period, when feelings run high, the time is not ripe for decisive action that risks alienation of those one wishes to change. Take Paxtor X, whose actions, though decisive, damaged the church fellowship and threatened his pastorate—"Look at him; he can't do any good now." (p. 93).

Three attitudes are apparent here, each one common to our general society. There is the teacher's attitude: only the long processes of education can change people. The possibility that God can use other methods is not raised. There is the lawyer's attitude: my responsibility is only to my "client." The possibility of a larger responsibility—to the wider community, to the church universal, to the gospel and its truth—is not raised. There is finally the politician's attitude: I am the indispensable man without whom no good can emerge in this situation; if anything should happen to me all is lost. The possibility is not raised that the minister may have to be sacrificed for God's truth to strike home. The possibility is not entertained that the minister may

have to be broken that others may be able to heal. The possibility is not faced that the minister may have to be crucified that God's glory may break forth in resurrection power.

What is *not* in evidence is the prophet's attitude. This commodity is in perpetually short supply in American Christianity. A thoroughly tamed and domesticated clergy finds the heights of cultural transcendence too much for it to climb. The clergy is by no means wholly to blame for this situation. Ministers are fashioned in churches which are fiercely determined to discourage a prophetic ministry. They are trained in seminaries which equip them to administer the program and meet the expectations of the already-existing institutions. (A course or two in Social Ethics is not enough to alter this general picture.) They find themselves on graduation in churches that know that their ministers will not stay a lifetime and that therefore develop mores and habits relatively independent of the wishes of the minister, who is a prisoner of the democratic processes of the congregation.

Yet we ministers ourselves are blameworthy. We struggle so infrequently and feebly against the chains that bind us! By referring to the majority vote—as though a vote were the ultimate arbiter of a minister's conduct—we justify so easily our acquiescence in a betrayal of Christ by our congregations! We barter away their integrity at so cheap a price!

The fact of the matter seems to be that we are called to be Christ-directed, and we end all too frequently, when the pressures of crisis threaten us, in being other-directed. And an other-directed Christianity has lost the capacity for transcendence without which the lordship of Christ cannot be expressed. Will Herberg says it well:

. . . What can the other-directed man or woman of our society make of the prophets and the prophetic faith of the Bible? The very notion of being "singled out," of standing "over against the world," is deeply repugnant to one for whom well being means conformity and adjustment. Religion is valued as conferring a sense of sociability and belonging, a sense of being really and truly *of* the world and society; how can the other-directed man then help but feel acutely uncomfortable with a kind of religion—for that is what biblical faith is—which is a declaration of permanent resistance to the heteronomous claims of society, community, culture, and cult? The other-directed man protects himself against this profoundly disturbing aspect of biblical faith by refusing to understand it; indeed, insofar as he is other-directed, he really cannot understand it. The religion he avows is still formally the

Jewish or Christian faith rooted in the prophetic tradition; it is, however, so transformed as it passes through the prism of the other-directed mind that it emerges as something quite different, in many ways, its opposite. . . .

. . . The word of faith could be proclaimed and made to thrive in a hostile world, but how can it be communicated in a culture that is all for it but simply will not, cannot, understand it?

When Whittaker Chambers renounced Communism (significantly, he called it leaving the winning side for the losing side) and returned to religious faith, he recorded his immediate impressions in these words:

There was a solemnity of another kind in the great spaces of the unfinished church [The Cathedral of St. John the Divine] in which huddled the little group with which I worshipped—old people mostly who seemed in that vast nave less like the bearers of those great tidings that had once stirred and transformed men's souls than like the survivors of a spiritual catastrophe and an age that could not long survive them.⁹

Compare this statement with what a Little Rock minister said at the height of the controversy:

One of the most disappointing and frightening aspects of this task has been the realization by Little Rock clergymen of the position the Church actually holds in the eyes of so many in the world. . . . [The] staggering fact [is] that the Church is largely without influence in the day of society's trouble. . . . Thus the ministers of Little Rock have been made to see that for a great many people, religion receives that tip-of-the-hat respect as for an aged gentleman who has nothing to say or to give to the present.¹⁰

The impotence of the church stems from the irrelevance of the church. The irrelevance of the church stems from its timidity, its refusal of controversy with the world, its renunciation of the role of social critic. The church cannot be healed at this point unless its leaders are healed at this point. The training and experience of the minister must include training and experience in the role of social critic as well as in the role of pastor, teacher, preacher, and administrator. Unless the present imbalance at this point is corrected, there will be many Little Rocks, in many places of the world, in many different areas of social concern and tension.

⁹ Whittaker Chambers, *Witness* (New York: Random House, 1952), p. 483.

¹⁰ Campbell and Pettigrew, *op. cit.*, pp. 129 f.

Recent Books on the Christian Ministry

WALLACE FORGEY

The Christian Ministry is one of the disciplines within the Professional Field at Andover Newton Theological School. Therefore no attempt will be made to present books which belong in other disciplines, but where these cross lines and in other seminaries would fall within the field of pastoral theology, they will be mentioned and in some cases briefly reviewed.

THE CHURCH

Richard H. Niebuhr's book, *The Purpose of the Church and Its Ministry* (Harper, 1956, \$2.50), while it is some four years old and has been often reviewed and much discussed, is a good book to own, read, mark, think about, and reread. This pointed summary of a very thorough study of theological education in North America confronts us with basic issues with which the church and its ministry must come to grips.

Making the Ministry Relevant (Scribner, 1960, \$3.95), edited by Hans Hofmann, is an attempt to think through the ministry at a deeper level and to make its message and witness relevant to this world in this generation. Such men as Samuel Miller, Paul Tillich, Seward Hiltner, and Reinhold Niebuhr assure one of a wide as well as deep coverage. Add to this James D. Smart's *The Rebirth of Ministry* (Westminster, 1960, \$3.50) and we have a well-rounded picture of the ministry for the church today. Smart examines the whole concept of the ministry in the light of its biblical character. This is no armchair study; it was born out of his experiences as pastor and teacher over a period of some twenty years. This is a book which very well may pass stern judgment on us. There is one other book to which I would call attention—a book of particular interest to Congregationalists and of general interest to the rest of us: *The Congregational Way of Life* (Prentice-Hall, 1960, \$3.50) by Arthur A. Rouner, Jr., minister of the Eliot Congregational Church, Newton, Massachusetts. It is a brief, clear, very readable story of the how, what, and whither of Congregationalism.

HOMILETICS

There are two books that I should consider basic. The first is *Design for Preaching* (Muhlenberg, 1958, \$4.75) by H. Grady Davis, Professor of Functional Theology at Chicago Lutheran Seminary. This is a book for ministers of all ages and at all stages

of development. The thought of this book may not be unique, but certainly it is creative. It makes preaching more than a mechanical something which one can master in a practical course. It makes preaching a thing of stature—a discipline which includes content as well as form. In this kind of preaching an idea takes on the form appropriate to itself and develops as inevitably as a seed grows into plant and flower. There is no easy reading here, but the rewards in thoughtful preaching and understanding listeners will be great. The second book is by Donald Macleod of Princeton Theological Seminary, who spells out its approach and thought in the title: *Word and Sacrament, A Preface to Preaching and Worship* (Prentice-Hall, 1960, \$4.65). Princeton is giving to preaching the wise and honored place which it ought to have. Dr. Macleod helps us to see the sermon in its proper relation to worship. He writes that the context of preaching “is the corporate act of worship and the quality of the latter is dependent upon the integrity of the Word declared.” Here is a book to restore your faith in preaching. Here is a book to stretch your mind. Here is a book which has the courage to talk about “the integrity of preaching.” Furthermore, the author includes four meditations and two sermons which illustrate what he is writing about.

The Ministry of Preaching (Harper, 1959, \$2.25) is a brief but significant contribution to homiletics by the Dean of Andover Newton Theological School, Roy Pearson. In language that is precise, nicely chiselled, chosen for the particular task in hand, Dean Pearson probes the minister in his relation to this high business of preaching—preparation, content, preacher and congregation, delivery, purpose. Not often, if ever, have I read so much sound sense about preaching in so few words.

There are six book of sermons which are well worth reading and studying: *Sermons Preached in a University Church* (Abingdon, 1959, \$3.75) by George Arthur Buttrick. These sermons were preached in the Memorial Church, Harvard University, and are an example of some of the best, if not the best, preaching to college students in this country during the last several years. They thrust deeply into the lives of the students and into the community life of a great university. *Our Waiting Father* (Harper, 1960, \$3.00), sermons on the parables, and *Our Heavenly Father* (Harper, 1960, \$3.00), sermons on The Lord's Prayer, by Helmut Thielicke are worthy examples of preaching at its deepest and

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best. There is power in these sermons. Thieliicke makes you think afresh about familiar things. Furthermore, I had the feeling that he was backing me into a corner and asking me, "Well, what do you make of this?" "What will you do about that?" Dr. Thieliicke is Rector of the University of Hamburg, the first Protestant theologian to hold that post. Here is a man to be reckoned with—and read. Another European, Emil Brunner, has given us a solid and inspiring book of sermons, theologically oriented, on the Apostles' Creed: *I Believe in the Living God* (Westminster, 1961, \$3.00), a series of sermons delivered during the Second World War. The removal of some dated material makes them as contemporary as today's newspaper and as timely and timeless as all great preaching is. These sermons are biblical, theological, and relevant. Perhaps this next book should not be included in a list of sermons and placed alongside the books of great preachers. However, I believe it belongs there. I refer, of course, to John Middleton Murry's *Not As The Scribes* (Horizon, 1960, \$3.75), a book of lay sermons presented in the order of the church year. Mr. Murry delivered them to a little farming community which he founded for the testing of ideals, personal and social. They are well done, thought provoking, soul searching, and challenging. It is good to read a man who in many ways was a severe critic of the church but a man who never quite could get away from it. He was drawn by its Communion as steel is drawn by a magnet. *Beggars in Velvet* (Abingdon, 1960, \$2.00) by Carlyle Marney certainly is not a book of sermons, and yet these are homilies that deserve our attention. Dr. Marney knows how to use words so that any subject comes alive. Happy is the man who has such a skill. So here is a man to read for help in preaching sermons that capture men's imagination—and possibly their lives.

ADMINISTRATION

The first book to which I want to call attention was published by Prentice-Hall in 1958 and given a second printing in 1959. It is *Handbook of Church Management* (Trade edition, \$9.00; text edition, \$6.75) by William H. Leach, who has produced a great many books, most of them dealing with the functional side of the ministry. This is a book for the minister and/or the church to own and to make available to members of boards and committees. It is really a reference book, wisely to be placed in the proper hands at the right time. It points out and points up the various tasks which must be done in the life of a church. It asks relevant questions; it provides evaluation charts; it literally hunts down

and makes plain the minutest detail. Many a board or committee would function much more meaningfully and thoroughly if such a guide were placed at its disposal. Budgets might then be more easily raised, programs more effectively promoted, time more nicely husbanded, and the spiritual life of the people deepened.

Every minister finds himself involved in the music and worship of the church in a very intimate way. Most ministers need help at this point. Austin C. Lovelace and William C. Rice have written *Music and Worship in the Church* (Abingdon, 1960, \$4.00) with a view to serving all who are in any way connected with music and/or worship. I have had time merely to sample this book in spots, but that has been enough for me to wish that such a book had been available in the early years of my ministry. Everything in this book may not satisfy all. I am sure, however, that a reading of this book will greatly enrich one's appreciation of and participation in the music and worship of the church. There is specific guidance where help is needed.

CULTURE

The late Archbishop William Temple once said, "It is a great mistake to suppose that God is only or chiefly concerned with religion." Our concern is with the whole of life. Surely one of our concerns is literature, especially modern literature. And because these two books have not been reviewed in either *Bulletin* or *Quarterly*, I should like to call special attention to them: Amos N. Wilder, *Theology and Modern Literature* (Harper, 1958, \$3.00) and Nathan A. Scott, Jr., *Modern Literature and the Religious Frontier* (Harper, 1958, \$2.50), two reliable guides into and through the labyrinth of modern literature. I believe them to be essential. Then add to these two others: Rollo May (ed.), *Symbolism in Religion and Literature* (Braziller, 1960, \$5.00) and Charles I. Glicksberg, *Literature and Religion* (Southern Methodist University Press, 1960, \$4.50). We could add many more to these, but the above four books are adequate to a basic understanding of the culture of our time as revealed through the literature of our times.

Of necessity, the next few books show my bias and are arbitrarily mentioned. *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (Cambridge, 1959, \$1.75) by C. P. Snow deals with the gulf which exists "between the men of science and the rest of us—especially those who are called literary or "intellectual." Recently a symposium at Harvard was based upon this book. We had better hurry and bridge the gulf or fill it in! Loren Eiseley has written a

book of such sheer beauty and naked truth that no one should miss reading it. He deals with man's view of nature and of human nature and the tremendous changes that have taken place because of findings in modern anthropology, biology and geology. The title of the book is *The Firmament of Time* (Atheneum, 1960, \$3.50). Miss it at your peril! And the name of Herbert Butterfield is enough to move one to read *International Conflict in the Twentieth Century: a Christian View* (Harper, 1960, \$3.00).

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

First of all, there are two books of prayers that are worthy of more than a passing nod. Robert N. Rodenmayer, Professor of Pastoral Theology at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, has prepared *The Pastor's Prayerbook* (Oxford, 1960, \$5.00). It is an excellent book. The prayers are short, direct, and for all occasions. And William Barclay's *A Book of Everyday Prayers* (Harper, 1959, \$2.00) is exactly what you would expect from this distinguished preacher. The prayers are "we" prayers, but they become intensely "I" as you pray them.

The works of Andrew W. Blackwood have always conveyed more than the words of this saintly man and teacher. He served as pastor for many years before becoming a teacher in Princeton Theological Seminary. His most recent book, *The Growing Minister* (Abingdon, 1960, \$3.00), deals with what the subtitle describes as "his opportunities and obstacles." He treats of the things that make for growth and those that hinder it. Any man will profit from reading this very wise book. Those of us who are older will wish that we might have had such a book in the early days of our ministry. Those who are younger and who read it will be grateful in later years that they did.

There is one last book which is rich in suggestion and materials in this day of "retreats," many of which are anything but retreats. John L. Casteel of Union Theological Seminary has written a most informative book on *Renewal In Retreats* (Association, 1959, \$3.50).

BOOK NOTES

Appleton-Century-Crofts. *Science Ponders Religion* (\$5.00), eighteen essays by American scientists on matters of religious interest and concern, edited by Harlow Shapley, distinguished Director *emeritus* of the Harvard College Observatory.

Baker Book House. *Notes on the Miracles of Our Lord* (\$2.50) and *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord* (\$2.50), by R. C. Trench. A "popularization" of the famous 19th century works of the Archbishop of Dublin, omitting notes in non-English languages or working them in English translation into the body of the text.

Beacon Press. *God and Man in Washington* (\$3.50), by Paul Blanshard. The pressures of religious groups—Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish—on Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court.

Bobbs-Merrill. *Faiths, Cults, and Sects of America* (\$5.00), by Richard Mathison. Covers the field in journalistic style "from Atheism to Zen," but too sketchily to be of much help to the serious student of American religion.

Harper's. *Two Types of Faith: A Study of the Interpenetration of Judaism and Christianity* (\$1.25), by Martin Buber; *Medieval Philosophy* (\$1.35), by F. C. Copleston; and *Greek Folk Religion* (\$1.25), by M. P. Nilsson. Nos. 75, 76, and 78 of the admirable, and inexpensive "Harper Torchbooks: Cloister Library" paperbound reprints. *A Historical Approach to the New Testament* (\$5.50), by F. C. Crownfield, Professor of Biblical Literature at Guilford College. An excellent text for courses on the New Testament at the college level.

Knopf. *Jesus and His Story* (\$4.00), by Ethelbert Stauffer. The life of Jesus as portrayed by a theologically and critically conservative German scholar.

Macmillans. *Ancient Judaism and the New Testament* (\$3.50), by F. C. Grant. A study of the debt of Christianity to ancient Judaism, by the dean of American New Testament scholars.

Meridian Books. *Jerusalem and Rome: The Writings of Josephus* (paperbound, \$1.45), selected and introduced by N. N. Glazer. An account of the history of the Jews from 134 B.C. to A.D. 73, compiled and arranged consecutively from the *Jewish War* and the *Antiquities*.

S. MACL. G.